



Research Paper

Women Entrepreneurship Issues, Challenges and Future Perspective in India. A Study of Self Help Groups in Himachal Pradesh.

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ABSTARCT

Entrepreneurship is considered as one of the most important factors contributing to the economic development of the society. Entrepreneurs have been considered instrumental in initiating and sustaining socio-economic development. In India, concept of women entrepreneurship is of recent origin. Women have become aware about their rights and situations and entered in different fields of business. They have established their own successful business empires. They are contributing towards the growth of economy and improvement of their socio-economic conditions. Government of India has given due importance to women empowerment in the country and several schemes has been introduced for the upliftment of women entrepreneurs. Women workforce ratio in the country is increasing due to the increase in the women literacy rate in India. The concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs) is proved to be boon for the rural women in some states of India. It has not only raised their income but also their social status. Overview of the working of self Help Groups (SHGs) in Himachal Pradesh is also depicted in this paper. This paper particularly focuses on various issues pertaining to women entrepreneur's issues, challenges and future perspective in India.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Women Problems, Women workforce, Women Empowerment, Self Help Groups

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Women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property. (Women, Business and the Law, World Bank, 2011) Globally, women represent 49.6% of the total population, but only 40.8% of the total workforce in the formal sector.

Since ages India has been men-dominated country. But, time is changing now. Women in India have outraged the fact that since hundreds of years they had been following the orders of men. They now know their rights and duties and with the spreading awareness amongst the women they are now no less than the men. They are walking with men at the same pace in each and every field.

In former days, for Women there were 3 Ks- Kitchen, Kids, Knitting, then came 3 Ps Powder, Papad, Pickles and now at present there are 4 Es- Electricity, Electronics, Energy, Engineering. Indian women had undergone a long way and are becoming increasingly visible and successful in all spheres and have shifted from kitchen to higher level of professional activities. Women entrepreneurs are fast becoming a force to reckon with in the business world and are not only involved in business for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Educated Women is contributing to a great extent to the social transformation and in the future, will be seen that more women venturing into areas traditionally dominated by men.

Today, many women have established their own economy i.e., entrepreneurial empire and are now ruling their world as they wished to. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA AND ABROAD

During 1990s, many women entered in the field of entrepreneurship to avail economic competence and independence, but many of them are observed to be not succeeding well as they had planned. Main reasons often are placed on the lack of enabling and sustaining facilities of entrepreneurial environment in general. Even then, there are success cases of women-run business units in India.

In India, women with varied social, economic, political, regional and linguistic backgrounds constitute half the nation. The socio-economic condition of women is the key for overall growth and development of the country. A study conducted by Manickaval (1997) shows that 56% of the women are unemployed. Hence, development of women entrepreneurship is essential to provide economic opportunities to women.

Entrepreneur is the key factor of entrepreneurship and now women have been recognized as successful entrepreneurs as they have qualities desirable and relevant for entrepreneurship development. In the process of entrepreneurship, women have to face various problems associated with entrepreneurship and these problems get doubled because of her dual role as a wage earner and a homemaker. According to Reddi (1991) women entrepreneurs in Goa feel frustrated at times because they need to spare their time and energy, both towards their business as well as domestic affairs. Women in India constitute a larger proportion of total unemployed population and hence it is imperative to find out the entrepreneurial constraints faced by them.

Rathore and Chabra, (1991) in their paper on 'Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship Training Strategies' state that Indian women find it increasingly difficult to adjust themselves to the dual role that they have to play as traditional housewives and compete with men in the field of business and industry. Working women are often tossed between home and work and experience mental conflicts as they are not able to devote the necessary amount of time and energy to their home and children and find it mostly difficult and sometimes impossible to pursue as a career. A study by Surti and Surupia showed that the married migrated women entrepreneurs coming from nuclear families experience greater role stress than the unmarried local women entrepreneurs coming from joint families.

Harinarayana, (1991) in his study on 'Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship' lists economic backwardness, lack of familial and community support, ignorance of opportunities, lack of motivation, shyness and inhibition, preference for traditional occupation and preference for secure jobs as the factors that inhibit promotion of grass root entrepreneurship among rural women.

Nayyar, Pooja et. al. (2007) in his entrepreneurs faces constraints in aspects of financial, marketing production, work place facility and health problems. Financial problems are related to non-availability of long-term finance, regular and frequent need of working capital. Poor location of shop and lack of transport facility are major marketing problems.

Production problems included the problem of non-availability of raw material. Entrepreneurs also face health problems such as fatigue, tension, and headache. Women entrepreneurs also face problem of improper water and space facility.

Srivastava and Chaudhary, (1995) in their work on 'Women Entrepreneurs: Problems Perspective and role expectations from banks, finds out that no single factor but a host of motivating factors act simultaneously on the individual creating dissonance in her, which in turn motivates her to take an action directed towards elimination or reduction of dissonance in the individual. Women faced problems mainly in the areas of marketing of products and approaching the banks for getting loans. Personal problems like time constraint and family stress were also cited. The study concludes that joint family is not an obstacle for developing entrepreneurs. In fact, it is a facilitating factor. The entrepreneurial role enhances familial bonds and increases role satisfaction of women entrepreneurs as a wife, mother and maker of a 'home'.

Caputo and Dolinsky, (1998) have examined the role of financial and human capital of household member to pursue self-employment among females. The analysis revealed that business knowledge and cooperation of husband in family matters contribute a lot to pursue the business. Finding further suggested that government should provide necessary skill to women to ensure rapid growth of entrepreneurship.

Punitha et. al. (1999) examined the problems and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in the Pondicherry region. A sample of 120 females enterprises were personally interviewed during the period June to July 1999 out of which 42 belonged to rural and 78 to urban areas. The major problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs are competition from better quality products and marketing problems. The problems for urban entrepreneurs are, apart from the competition from better quality products, is the difficulty in getting loans. The least problems faced by both rural and urban women entrepreneurs are ignorance about schemes, distance from market and ignorance about agency and institutions.

Watson, (2003) has examined the failure rates among female control business in Australia. The analysis of study highlighted that failure rate female control business is relatively higher than male controlled business. But the difference is not significant after controlling for the effects of industry.

Vinze, (1987) in her work pertaining to 'Women Entrepreneurs in India' states that since women entrepreneurs need constant guidance in matters pertaining to financial discipline, it would be mutually

beneficial if the banks and women entrepreneurs learn to appreciate each other's viewpoints: More attention is required in matters like streamlining of the assistance required, coordination of procedure and evolving a better code for assistance agencies. She further feels that management skills are must and women entrepreneurs need to be trained in this area.

Hakim, (1979) suggested that the employment life cycle of woman can be split into two phases. The first spans employment prior to the birth of the woman's first child. The second phase comes after the youngest child is of school age. Martin and Roberts, who collected detailed work histories, suggests that this aggregate bimodal profile masks the fact that for many women situation is more complex. Women with children often have a more continuous working life, with spells of paid work between children and an earlier return to work after the youngest child reaches the school age. Women spend more of their potential working lives in paid employment, and the trend is towards even greater participation.

Brush, (1992) concluded from the review of existing research that women's business leadership cannot be understood using traditional (male oriented) framework of business analysis. She writes "significant difference have been found in skills, business goals, management styles, business characteristics and growth rates. These variations suggest that women perceive and approach business differently than men".

CONCEPT AND STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Leader of the Opposition. As of 2011, the President of India, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha (Lower House of the parliament) are all women.

Entrepreneurship has gained currency across the sphere and female- entrepreneurship has become an important module. India is one of the fastest emerging economies and the importance of entrepreneurship is realized across the gamut.

According to government of India, "An enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated by the enterprise to women."

"Women Entrepreneurship" means an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically increases their economic strength as well as position in society. "Women Entrepreneur" is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life.

Women in business are a recent phenomenon in India. By and large they had confide themselves to petty business and tiny cottage industries. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors. Which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs? A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them.

In rural India, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total female labour. In overall farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55% to 66% of the total labour. According to a 1991 World Bank report, women accounted for 94% of total employment in dairy production in India. Women constitute 51% of the total employed in forest-based small-scale enterprises.

GROWTH OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

In India, women entry into business is a new phenomenon. Women entry into business, or say, entrepreneurship is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities mainly to 3 Ps viz, pickles, powder and papad. Women in India plugged into business for both pull and push factors. Pull factors imply the factors, which encourage women to start an occupation or venture with an urge to do something independently. Push factors refer to those factors, which compel to take up their own business to tide over their economic difficulties and responsibilities.

With growing awareness about business and spread of education among women over the period, women have started shifting from 3 Ps to engross to 3 modern E's, viz. Engineering, Electronics and Energy. They have excelled in these activities. Women entrepreneurs manufacturing solar cookers in Gujarat, small foundries in Maharashtra and T.V. capacitors in Orissa have proved beyond doubt that given the opportunities, they can excel their male counterparts. Smt. Sumati Morarji (Shipping Corporation), Smt. Yumutai Kirloskar (Mahila

Udyog Limited), Smt. Neena Malhotra (Exports) and Smt. Shahnaz Hussain (Beauty Clinic) are some exemplary names of successful and accomplished women entrepreneurs in our country. There are several additional emerging sectors where women can exploit their hidden talent these are:

- ✓ Eco-friendly technology
- ✓ Bio-technology
- ✓ IT enabled enterprises
- ✓ Event Management
- ✓ Tourism industry
- ✓ Telecommunication Plastic materials
- ✓ Vermiculture
- ✓ Mineral water
- ✓ Sericulture
- ✓ Floriculture
- ✓ Herbal & health care
- ✓ Food, fruits & vegetable processing

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS IN INDIA

The all round development of women has been one of the focal point of planning process in India. **The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56)** envisaged a number of welfare measures for women. Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board, organization of Mahila Mandals and the Community Development Programmes were a few steps in this direction.

In the **Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61)**, the empowerment of women was closely linked with the overall approach of intensive agricultural development programmes.

The Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans (1961-66 and 1969-74) supported female education as a major welfare measure.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79) emphasized training of women, who were in need of income and protection. This plan coincided with International Women's Decade and the submission of Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. In 1976, Women's welfare and Development Bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) saw a definite shift from welfare to development. It recognized women's lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their growth.

The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) emphasized the need for gender equality and empowerment. For the first time, emphasis was placed upon qualitative aspects such as inculcation of confidence, generation of awareness with regards, to rights and training in skills for better employment.

The Eight Five-Year Plan (1992-97) focused on empowering women, especially at the grass roots level, through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) adopted a strategy of women's component plan, under which not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits were earmarked for women-specific programmes.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07) aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring Survival, Protection and Development of women and children through rights based approach.

The Eleventh Five-Year Plan lays down six monitorable targets (1) Raise the sex ratio for age group 0-6 from 927 in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17; (2) Ensure that at least 33% of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children; (3) Reduce IMR from 57 to 28 and MMR from 3.01 to one per 1000 live births; (4) Reduce malnutrition among children of age group 0-3 to half its present level; (5) Reduce anaemia among women and girls by 50% by the end of the Eleventh Plan; and (6) Reduce dropout rate for primary and secondary schooling by 10% for both girls as well as boys." (see Appendix).

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The government programme for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 27 schemes for women operated by different departments and ministries. Some of these are:

- ✓ Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- ✓ Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- ✓ Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
- ✓ Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS)
- ✓ Working Women's Forum
- ✓ Indira Mahila Yojana

- ✓ Indira Mahila Kendra
- ✓ Mahila Samiti Yojana
- ✓ Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- ✓ Khadi and Village Industries Commission
- ✓ Indira Priyadarshini Yojana
- ✓ SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- ✓ SBI's Sree Shakti Scheme
- ✓ NGO's Credit Schemes
- ✓ National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes

The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by nongovernmental organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SSI IN INDIA OWNED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

In India small scale industrial units are owned both by men and women. Table 1 reveals that among the small scale industrial units owned by women entrepreneurs in India, Kerala tops the list with 1.39 Lakh units, followed by Tamil Nadu with 1.30 Lakh units. Tamil Nadu ranks second in the total number of small-scale units owned by women entrepreneurs in India. Lakshadweep has the lowest number of small-scale units owned by women entrepreneurs (67 units).

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

Women entrepreneurs encounter two sets of problems, viz, general problems of entrepreneurs and problems specific to women entrepreneurs. These are discussed as follows: **Problem of finance:** Finance is regarded as “**life blood**” for any enterprise, be it big or small. However, women entrepreneurs suffer from shortage of finance on two counts. **Firstly**, women do not generally have property on their names to use them as collateral for obtaining funds from external sources. Thus, their access to the external sources of funds is **limited**.

Secondly, the banks also consider women less credit- worthy and discourage women borrowers on the belief that they can at any time leave their business. Given such situation, women entrepreneurs are bound to rely on their own savings, if any and loans from friends and relatives who are expectedly meager and negligible. Thus, women enterprises fail due to the shortage of finance.

Scarcity of raw material: Most of the women enterprises are plagued by the scarcity of raw material and necessary inputs. Added to this are the high prices of raw material, on the other. The failure of many women co-operatives in 1971 engaged in basket making is an example how the scarcity of raw material sounds the death-knell of enterprises run by women.

Stiff Competition: Women entrepreneurs do not have organization set- up to pump in a lot of money for canvassing and advertisement. Thus, they have to face a stiff competition for marketing their products with both organized sector and their male counterparts. Such a competition ultimately results in the liquidation of women enterprises.

Limited Mobility: Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to various reasons. A single woman asking for room is still upon suspicion. Cumbersome exercise involved in starting an enterprise coupled with the officials humiliating attitude towards women compels them to give up an idea of starting an enterprise.

Family Ties: In India, it is mainly a woman's duty to look after the children and other members of the family. Man plays a secondary role only. In case of married woman, she has to strike a fine balance between her business and family. Her total involvement in family leaves little or no energy and time to devote for business. Support and approval of husbands seem necessary condition or women's entry in to business. Accordingly, the educational level and family background of husbands positively influence women's entry into business activities.

Lack of Education: In India, around three- fifths (60%) of women are still illiterate illiteracy is the root cause of socio- economic problems. Due to the lack of education and that too qualitative education, women are not aware of business, technology and market knowledge. Also, lack of education causes low achievement motivation among women. Thus, lack of education creates problems for women in the setting up and running of business enterprises.

Male dominated Society: Male chauvinism is till the order of the day in India. The constitution of India speaks of equality between sexes. But, in practice women are looked upon as able i.e. weak in all respects. Women suffer from male reservations about a women's role, ability and capacity and are treated accordingly. In nutshell, in the maledominated Indian society, women are not treated equal to men. This in turn, serves as a barrier to women entry into business.

Low Risk- Bearing Ability: Women in India lead a protected life. They are less educated and economically not self-dependent. All these reduce their ability to bear risk involved in running an enterprise. Risk bearing is an essential requisite of a successful entrepreneur. In addition to above problems, inadequate infra structural facilities, shortage of power, high cost of production, social attitude, low need for achievement and socio-economic constraints also hold the women back from entering into business.

TOP 10 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS OF INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

The Indian women are no longer treated as show pieces to be kept at home. They are also enjoying the impact of globalization and making an influence not only on domestic but also on international sphere. Women are doing a wonderful job striking a balance between their house and career. Here are a few:

1. **Indra Nooyi, CEO, Pepsi Co.,** Indra Nooyi has been ranked No. 4 in the survey of 100 most powerful women in the world carried out by Forbes. She grew up in Chennai. She did her BSc. in Chemistry from Madras Christian College followed by a Master's Degree in Finance and Marketing from IIM, Calcutta. Nooyi then attended Yale University, USA for a Master's degree in Public and Private Management. She started her career at Boston Consulting Group in 1980 and then held crucial positions at Motorola and Asea Brown Boveri. She then joined Pepsi Co. in 1994. She tailored the company with her risk taking. Pepsi acquired Tropicana in 1998 and she became the President of Pepsi Co in 2001.

2. **Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman & Managing Director of Biocon Ltd.,** who became India's richest woman in 2004, was educated at the Bishop Cotton Girls School and Mount Carmel College in Bangalore. She founded Biocon India with a capital of Rs.10, 000 in her garage in 1978 – the initial operation was to extract an enzyme from papaya. Her application for loans was turned down by banks then on three counts – biotechnology was then a new word, the company lacked assets, women entrepreneurs were still a rarity. Today, her company is the biggest biopharmaceutical firm in the country.

3. **Chanda Kochchar, Managing Director and CEO, ICICI Bank Ltd.,** A member of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants in India, Chanda Kochchar first joined ICICI Bank as a trainee in 1984. And thereafter, she has continuously climbed up the ladder, heading almost all the major sections of the institution. She has been awarded with Padma Bhushan in 2011 and has been consistently ranked in the list of 'The most powerful women in the World' by the Forbes magazine.

4. **Ekta Kapoor, creative head of Balaji Telefilms,** is the daughter of Jeetendra and sister of Tushar Kapoor. She has been synonymous with the rage of soap operas in Indian TV, after her most famous venture 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' which was aired in 2000 on Star plus. Ekta dominates Indian Television. At the 6th Indian Tele Awards 2006; she bagged the Hall of Fame award for her contributions.

5. **Neelam Dhawan, Managing Director, Microsoft India, leads Microsoft India.** She is a graduate from St. Stephens College in 1980, and also passed out from Delhi University's Faculty of Management studies in 1982. Then she was keen on joining FMCG majors like Hindustan Lever and Asian Paints, both companies rejected Dhawan, as they did not wish to appoint women for marketing and sales.

6. **Naina Lal Kidwai** was the first Indian woman to graduate from Harvard Business School. Fortune magazine listed Kidwai among the world's top 50 Corporate Women from 2000 to 2003. According to the Economic times, she is the first woman to head the operations of a foreign bank in India. (HSBC)

7. **Indu Jain,** the multi-faceted lady used to be the Chairman of the Times Group-The most powerful and largest Media house India has known. Indu Jain is known by many different identities such as that of spiritualist, humanist, entrepreneur, an educationalist but most prominently she played the role of the Chairman of Times Group. Indu Jain is the perfect picture of the successful Indian Woman entrepreneur.

8. **Simone Tata has been instrumental in changing a small subsidiary of Tata Oil Mills** into the largest cosmetic brand in India – LAKME, synonymous today with Indian Fashion. She became a part of Lakme during 1961 and has been responsible for turning the company into one of the biggest brands of fashion in India. At present she is the Chairperson of Trent Limited, a subsidiary of Tata Group.

9. **Mallika Srinivasan, currently the Director of TAFE- Tractors and Farm Equipment,** India was honored with the title of Businesswoman of the Year during 2006 by the Economic Times. She joined the company in 1986 and has since been responsible for accelerating turnover from 85 crores to 2900 crores within a span of 2 decades.

10. **Preetha Reddy, Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals,** Chennai, one of the largest healthcare conglomerates of India, is one of the pioneer businesswomen of India in the segment of Health Care Industry. Women like these are an inspiration for all other women who strive to achieve great heights in their lives. Taking them as our role models each one of us can be there where they are right now. All we need have is faith in ourselves, confidence and above all a fixed aim that we need work towards.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGs): AN OVERVIEW OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

The scheme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) launched in 1982-83 (presently called as SHGs), inaugurated an era for systematically organizing women in groups for providing them opportunities of self-employment on a sustained basis. Several thousands of rural women from the length and breadth of the country participate in this programme and they have taken up a number of trades under DWCRA banner.

The programme called for formation of groups of 10-15 women who could collectively engage in an activity. One woman amongst the members functions as the group organizer who helps in the choice of activity, procurement of raw materials, marketing of products etc.

A revolving fund of Rs. 15,000/- (subsequently increased to Rs.20, 000/-) was made available to each group for credit and administrative needs. The programme is implemented by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) at the district level. SHG is the only programme of its kind, which aims at empowering the rural poor women by inculcating entrepreneurial skill. It seeks to encourage collective action in the form of group activities, which are known to work better than individual efforts.

As per official Census of India 2011 population of Himachal Pradesh is having 68.56 Lakh showing change of 12.81 % from last decade. Himachal Pradesh feeds 0.57% of total population of India. As per preliminary report of Himachal Pradesh, out of total population of 6,556,509 male and female constituted 3,473,892 and 3,382,617 respectively. Himachal Pradesh is also one of the states where women empowerment is on rise and entrepreneurial activities are increasing. According to Census Report, 2011 literacy rate among women is 76.60 %. With regard to sex ratio, Himachal Pradesh is having 974 more than India's average sex ratio i.e., 940 (Census of India Report, 2011). Female workforce participation in the Himachal Pradesh is 48.9 per cent, higher than other major states and much higher than that of India's average (26.0%).

There were over 6000 registered Mahila Mandals in the state. Cash awards are given to those who perform well. They work in the villages to eradicate liquor shops and to promote women's economic empowerment. The Mahila Mandals in Kangra districts are performing well. Moreover, Himachal Pradesh has a good record of the status and functioning of Mahila Mandals for employment generation for women through the formation of Self-Help Groups in rural areas, for raising the per capita income of women. SHGs are emerging as a success story in Himachal Pradesh. Against a target of setting up 3000 SHGs during 2000-01, a total of 1038 SHGs have been established until December 2000.

An important achievement is that loan repayment of 95 per cent of those SHGs is 100 per cent. Moreover, a group of members of SHGs (Kather, Solan district) travelled to one of the South Indian states in 1995-96 on a field trip and are now implementing the lessons learnt from the experience of their counterparts. The SHGs are involved in a wide range of economic activities, such as agro-business; handicraft; floriculture; sheep, goat and pig farming; papad making; tailoring and carpentry; running of fair price shops, etc., in order to be gainfully employed and augment household incomes. The higher percentage of work participation of women and the effective functioning of Mahila Mandals and SHGs have raised the level of women's involvement in household decision-making.

The NFHS II (1999) report maintains that in Himachal Pradesh, 80.1 per cent of women have access to surplus money as compared to 66.2 per cent in Kerala and 78.3 per cent in Punjab.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

The specific objective of the scheme is to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural women and creating employment opportunities. The specific objectives are:

- ✓ To help and promote self-employment among the rural women, who are below the poverty line, by providing skill training in vocations which are acceptable to the beneficiaries, by encouraging productivity in their existing vocations and by introducing new activities hitherto undertaken;
- ✓ To organize the beneficiaries in groups, activity-wise and promote economic and social self reliance;
- ✓ To generate income for the rural poor by creating avenues for production of goods and services; To organize production enhancing programmes in rural areas; and
- ✓ To provide for care of the children of the workingwomen by providing an improved environment, care and food by establishing crèches / balwadis.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

The country needs to mobilize and utilize fully all its resources including human resources. The participation of women in economic activities is necessary not only from a human resource point of view but also is essential even from the objective of raising the status of women in the society. The economic status of the women is now accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development and therefore it becomes imperative for the government to frame policies for development of entrepreneurship among women. The long-term

objectives of the development programmes for women should aim to raise their economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national life and development. For this, due recognition has to be accorded to the role and contribution of women in the various social economic and political and cultural activities.

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